

The Centrality of Christ in Eternity Past

by Keith Malcomson

This sermon emphasizes the centrality of Christ, focusing on how God's eternal plan and blessings are found in Jesus Christ. It delves into the concepts of predestination, election, and the inheritance believers have in Christ, highlighting the profound love and purpose God has for His people from eternity past.

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Scripture: Ephesians 1:4, Ephesians 1:5, Ephesians 1:11, Ephesians 1:18, 1 Peter 1:2, Romans 8:29, Jeremiah 1:5, Philippians 3:10, 1 Corinthians 2:7, Romans 8:28, 2 Timothy 2:19

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Description

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Transcript

Praise God. Please turn with me to the word of God here this morning to Ephesians chapter three, Ephesians chapter three. And I want to start a new series here this morning called the centrality of Christ.

We live in a very dark hour. And here's one of the main reasons why I'd want to preach this this morning. Even from the beginning of January, the amount of information coming through, the pressure, the things that are happening in our world.

If you try to keep up with that, you will get very distracted. I want to call you and this church back to the centrality of Christ. I know we've never left it.

I've endeavored from a child to preach, to believe, to stand, to fellowship in the centrality of Christ. But I want to call you back to the centrality of Christ. Anyone who listens to us online this morning or during the week, I want to call you back to the centrality of Christ.

And I want to read from Ephesians chapter one here this morning, reading down to verse 14. And it says there, Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God to the saints, which are at Ephesus, to the faithful in Christ Jesus, grace be to you and peace from God, our father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he had chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by

Jesus Christ through himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise and the glory of his grace, wherein he has made us accepted in the beloved in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace, wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure.

I hope you're getting the message here this morning, which he has purposed in himself that in the dispensation of the fullness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, which are on earth, even in him in whom also we have obtained an inheritance being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, that we should be to the praise of his glory who first trusted in Christ, in whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the holy spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of his glory. Praise God. Let's pray here this morning as we come to the word of God.

Father, I thank you for the word of God. I thank you for Christ, and I thank you for what we find in him. I thank you for our inheritance in him, forgiveness, redemption, adoption, being chosen.

My God, for predestination. Lord God, I thank you that you placed all of your blessings. There is nothing we can receive.

There is nothing we can desire that isn't found in the Lord Jesus Christ. My God, you placed all spiritual blessings from out of eternity that will carry us into eternity, and it's all found in the Lord Jesus Christ. Father, I pray, and we agree together this morning, open every single eye, grant us an anointing of the holy spirit, that our eyes might be opened to see these things, that our ears might be opened to hear what the spirit of God would say, and that you would give us a heart to perceive and to understand what is written in the holy scriptures.

We bless you, and we praise you, and we thank you that this is a book about the Lord Jesus Christ, that he is the center, and Lord God, we want to emphasize his centrality here this morning. My God, grip us, dominate us, so God, give us a fixation with the centrality of Christ, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Amen. I want to start this series on the centrality of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are going to look next week at the centrality of Christ in creation.

At some point over the next weeks, we're going to look at the centrality of Christ at the cross in all of world history. That is the center point, but I want to go back before that. You see, many Christians, their entire focus, their entire vision, their entire understanding is only at the cross.

All they say, and thank God, they do have a vision of the cross, but most of their focus is on a three-and-a-half-year period in the person of Christ, in his earthly physical ministry, summed up in his work at the cross. That is what they see. They see the Christ of the cross.

Others focus on the Christ in the crib, his birth, his virgin birth, his miraculous coming, him sending to do the will of the father. But I want to take you in this first message way beyond the centrality of Christ at the cross. I want to even go back further than the centrality of Christ in creation.

This is my message this morning, the centrality of Christ in eternity past. Not in time, not in time, but we are going to go right back to the centrality of Christ in eternity past. You see, I believe our vision is too

small.

If all you see is Calvary, it is too small. If all you see is Christ at creation, creating all things, your vision is too small. I want us in this hour of crisis where you're being pressurized, where your time is being stolen, your focus, your fears are being stirred up in this hour and generation.

I want us to be lifted out of time here this morning and on these Sunday mornings. I want to bring you back to the beginning of all things. I want you to have the broad perspective, not only of all of church history, not only of all of world history.

I want to take you back beyond time itself and I want to bring you to the eternal Christ, a Christ not limited to the cross or to the crib or even to creation. I want to take you back to a Christ that is beyond all of those things. It says in Psalm 90 verse 2, before the mountains were brought forth or even thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.

You see, I want to lift you out of time in this entire series. We are going to start with the Christ of eternity past and God willing, if we finish this series, I'm going to take you all the way through to the Christ of eternity future. We are going to span eternity and as we do, we're going to stop off in time to look at who this Christ was, his centrality in the church, his centrality in Israel, his centrality in the scriptures, his centrality in the Christian life.

We are going to look at the full spectrum of what the Bible teaches of the centrality of Christ in every spectrum of life. It was F.B. Meyer who once spoke about the letter to the Ephesians being the epistle of inness. Inness, do you understand what he means? You say, what is inness? What is the epistle of inness? He's talking about the little word in that's used in the letter to the Ephesians and he says this word in is so used so many times, you've got to call it the letter or the epistle of inness.

Inness, you're going to catch this by the time I finish. I want to assure you the expression in Christ occurs 174 times in the New Testament. Paul here in this letter mentions the word in Christ 21 times in the first two chapters of the Ephesians.

21 times he says in Christ, in Christ, in Christ. This is the epistle of inness. When you come to this, you see that everything is in Christ, through Christ, for Christ, and by Christ.

It is dominated by Christ. When you begin to read Ephesians chapter one, you are overwhelmed with the revelation, with the truth, with the doctrine. It's got to lift you out of your puny little isolated life, out of time into eternity, from your own earthly life to that of a heavenly life.

You've got to see beyond yourself here this morning. When you come to Ephesians, you see that Christ is not only the foundation of the spiritual building, but he is also the heavenly bridegroom that is coming for the bride of Christ. As we deal with this series, we're going to see that Christ must have the preeminence.

He is the center of all things, the beginning of all things, the conclusion of all things, the source of all things. He is the desire of my heart. This is the centrality of Christ.

But I want to take you back to eternity and see before the cross, before creation, way back into eternal ages, before there was time, before there was man, before there were planets, before there was the physical realm, before everything was created. I want to take you back to the person of Christ and his position in eternity. I've got three points here this morning.

My first point is Christ's position in the Godhead in eternity past. Before we look at anything else in Ephesians chapter 1, I want to show you Christ's position in the Godhead. You see, as we come to Ephesians 1, we see three spectrums here.

We see the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. That is the Godhead. We believe in a Trinity, a God.

There's only one God, but there are three persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three in one, one in three, Holy Trinity. Do I believe in the doctrine of the Trinity? I absolutely do believe there are three distinct persons, and yet they're one God. There is only one God, not three gods.

You cannot understand God unless you understand there are three persons. When we come to Ephesians 1, and we're going to see it here this morning, it is the Father who plans everything. It is him that chooses.

It is him that predestinates. It's him that gives you Christ and gives you every blessing in Christ. It is the Son who actually becomes the vessel or the means of all blessings.

He becomes the sacrifice for your sins. He sheds his blood for your sin. The Father didn't do that.

The Son done that. Then we see the Holy Spirit here actually ministering this to individuals. In Ephesians 1, we see the Father's ministry from verse 3 to 6. We see the Son's ministry in verse 7 through to verse 11.

Then we see the Holy Spirit's ministry, verse 13 through to verse 14. Those who know their Greek in this chapter, they actually say from verse 1 to verse 14, you have one continuous sentence, one paragraph, one entire summary here. So we see the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit before time, outside of time, actually planning your redemption.

The Father plans it in eternity. The Son comes into time to redeem you. Then the Holy Spirit is here now in your life in this hour, and he is applying it, working it in you.

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. We are going to see that Christ is central in the Godhead. God the Father has given Jesus the Son a position with the Father and with the Holy Spirit that is utterly central.

He has placed him in the midst of things. Listen to what it says in John 1, verse 18. No man has seen God at any time.

The only begotten Son, where is he? Which is in the bosom of the Father. He hath declared him. Do you see where Christ actually is, where he dwells, and where he has always dwelt? Is in the bosom of the Father.

We begin to see that Christ is central to God the Father's plan. He is in the very heart of the Father. He is in the bosom, the most intimate place in the Godhead.

He is at the center of God's plan, and that's how God has actually made it, that Christ alone will declare God. You cannot see God. You cannot know God.

You cannot go directly to the Father. You cannot pray to him. You cannot worship him.

You cannot receive anything from God the Father. Do you know what he says? You must come through the Son. You can't get anything from me.

You can't ask anything. I can't do anything for you. I have made the Son central.

He represents me. He is in my image. If you've seen him, you've seen me.

Those who talk about not emphasizing the Son and having to know the Father don't know what they're talking about. If you truly know the Son, then you know the Father. Those who talk all about knowing the Father heart of God, and we've got to go beyond, they don't know what they're talking about.

If you truly know the Father, do you know what he's going to say? You want to know the Father heart of God? He's going to say, look at my Son. Do you really want to know my heart for you? You want to know my love? Then look at the Son. Do you see the position the Father has given to the Son? He's going to declare my word, my thoughts, my will, my love, my plans, my grace, my mercy.

Anything I have, I put it in the Son. He represents me. If you want to see me, you've got to see the Son.

If you want to hear my voice, you've got to hear the Son. If you want to know me, you've got to know the Son. He's made the Son to be central.

In John chapter 17 verse 5, it says, Christ praying to the Father, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I'm showing you the Christ of eternity past. I'm showing you the position he had before there were angels, cherubims, a garden of Eden, planets roaming around the universe.

I'm actually showing you that God the Son actually had glory with the Father before the world was. They were in intimate fellowship, communion. They loved each other and they dwelt in glory together.

Again in John 17 24, it says, Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given to me, for thou lovest me before, not from, but before the foundation of the world. Do you see that Christ often spoke? His beginning was not a creation or at the virgin birth or at the cross. We have to look back into eternity before there was time or anything physical.

You see, you and I can't think beyond the visible, the physical of time itself, but I'm showing you of a relationship between Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. They are dwelling together. The Son dwells in the bosom of the Father.

The Father says, I love you, and Christ remembers back and he says, I want them to experience the love that I had with you before the world was, that glory that was upon us. Can you imagine Christ coming as a virgin, suffering as a man, experiencing time, growing in age? That never happened for all eternity. He was beyond time.

He was eternal. There is no aging. There is no passing of time.

Do you know what else? There is no change in eternity past. Nothing changes. I mean, absolutely nothing changes.

In eternity past, everything is exactly the same. There's no aging, no progression. How can you get more holy? You can't.

How can you know more? You can't. How can you mature more? You can't. You had the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit dwelling together, loving each other.

It says in Colossians 1:17, and he that is Christ is before all things. In John chapter 1 verse 1, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Who is this? This is the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the beginning, before anything, in Proverbs chapter 8 verse 22, listen to what it says, the Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way. Before his works of old, I was set up from everlasting. From the beginning, or ever, the earth was.

I believe this is a prophecy about Christ. Before there's a creation, what was with God, the Lord, the Father? Before creation, it was the Lord Jesus Christ. Listen to Micah chapter 5 verse 2. But thou, Bethlehem, though thou be little amongst the thousands of Judah.

You know what Bethlehem is. You know where it is. You know what happened at Bethlehem.

You know why we even know about Bethlehem. Because of one person who came forth out of Bethlehem. This was a prophecy several hundred years earlier, and it pinpoints Bethlehem of Judah.

Out of thee shall come forth unto me that is the ruler in Israel. Listen at what it says about this child that will come out of Bethlehem, whose going forth has been from of old, from everlasting. Here the Jews had a prophecy.

One is going to be born. One is going to come out of Bethlehem. That little tiny place in that despised region.

But you know that one that's going to be born and come forth, he is actually going to be the everlasting one. His goings forth were from all of eternity, and yet he's going to come and be born. Since you realize I was 12 years old, the first time I heard a preacher stand and preach, it changed my life when he preached it.

This is what he said. He said, do you know that in eternity past, before God created the world, God loved you. God knew your name, and God looked upon you with love.

It so changed my life. I've never been the same from 12 years old when that preacher talked about a God in eternity who looked upon me with love. Saints, I'm telling you about something of the everlasting Christ.

I don't want you to look at Calvary this morning. We've done that at the Lord's table. I don't want you to look at creation.

I want to take you back into the realms of eternity. The one that came at Bethlehem is the one that went forth of everlasting. He is the eternal God.

Look here at Christ's position in the Godhead in Ephesians chapter 1. It says in verse 9 about the mystery of God's will. It is a mystery. Do you know what a mystery is? It is something in the Bible hidden.

No eye can see it naturally. You can't understand it with your natural mind. It is utterly hidden unless God reveals it to you.

So the mystery of God's will we actually read of here according to his good pleasure which he had purposed in himself. So in eternity everlasting God had the mystery of his will. Only God knew his own will, and you know what? He had good pleasure in this purpose plan that he was going to bring forth.

In verse 11, to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. I want you to see here that in eternity past God the Father had a plan. He had a purpose.

He had a will. Do you know the word purpose used here? What it means? It means to determine something, to decree, to plan, or to exhibit it. Or let me take it a stage further, to place it somewhere.

So it's actually saying God had a purpose in himself, in his own heart. He had a plan. He had a decree.

He had his entire will, and you know what he done? He made that plan, and he placed it, or he exhibited it, or he laid it out for all to see. Where did he lay it? He actually placed it in his son the Lord Jesus Christ. Now listen carefully.

I'm talking about Christ's position in the Godhead. God the Father's got this plan. I mean a remarkable plan.

He has a will, and do you know where he places it? In the Lord Jesus Christ. I think I haven't persuaded some of you yet. Ephesians chapter 3 verse 11 speaks about the eternal purpose which he, that is God, purposed in Christ Jesus the Lord.

It's called an eternal purpose. It means it wasn't made in time. It wasn't made a creation.

It wasn't made in the cross. This is a plan, a purpose, a decree, a will, a strategy that was made in eternity past, and you know what? It was an eternity past that God the Father took this plan, and he put this plan, and he purposed it in his son Jesus Christ. Do you see how in eternity past Christ is central in all things? God the Father has raised him up.

God the Father has given him a name above all other names, and you know what? God puts all of his thoughts, all of his words, all of his promises, all of his plans, all of his desires for creation, and for time, and for you individually, and you know what? That eternal purpose, he places it in Christ. He's going to display his plan in Jesus Christ. You cannot know God's will.

You cannot know God's desire. You cannot know the thoughts of God unless you go to the Lord Jesus Christ. Let me push this further for a few moments.

Romans chapter 8, 28, it speaks about all of those that are called, listen, according to his purpose. When the call of God comes to you, I mean the preaching of the gospel. You hear the gospel for the first time.

You begin to get convicted. You say, I believe. That is the call of God.

To be called is that you have come out of the world. You've heard Christ speak to you and say, come follow me. That is the call of God.

Romans 8, 28 says, called according to his purpose. Do you realize there was a purpose in Christ before eternity concerning you? If you get called in the gospel, it's part of that plan that was placed in Christ before the creation of the world. Do you think he only decided this year, last year, two years ago, 40 years ago? Do you think he said, I'm going to save that one, or I'm after them, or let's see what I can do with Ellen here.

Do you realize that if you're called, if you repent of your sin, if you put faith in the blood, if you say, forgive me of all my sin, do you realize that goes right back to a plan that was in Christ before eternity? Your

salvation did not start at creation. Neither did it start at the cross. Neither did it start on the day of your being convicted of your sin.

Your actual salvation is part of a plan that goes way beyond all of creation. Before sin entered the world, before Adam and Eve fell, before the devil ever fell from his position. All of this is way beyond it.

I'm telling you what the Bible says time after time after time again and again. You are called according to his purpose. If you've received the call of God, it's according or in line with a plan.

When you get called out of your own sinful life and you come into Christ and come into the church of God, you know what? You're entering into something. You don't even realize the plan yet. You're only beginning.

This is the beginning part of you beginning to say there's an entire plan that I am now caught up in. Do you realize when you get saved, you're part of an everlasting plan? You're being brought into something. You're utterly ignorant of it.

You're out there in the world thinking, I know everything. I know better. I'm 16 years old and I know better than my parents.

They're old-fashioned. They've been around here for long ages. I've been here 16 years.

I know everything. I know every fact. I have more wisdom than them.

I know the best style. I know the best people to hang out with. I know everything.

I can make all the decisions. What a tragic thing, saints. When we become believers in Christ, we enter into a remarkable plan.

We begin to see that we're not only part of Christ of Calvary. We're actually a part of Christ of eternity past in him before eternity. We're caught up in something massive here and no wonder that Christ is central in eternity past and in creation and at the cross and in the church of Jesus Christ.

We have lost the centrality of Christ. We're caught up in gadgets and gimmicks. Well, we want you to feel better.

This church is going to be about you. It will revolve around man, what man wants, what man desires. What a blasphemy when you realize that anything that is based on man, for man, and focused on man is an abomination unto God.

Christ must be the center. If he's not the center of your Christianity, it is a poor Christianity. A church that is not centered on Christ is a very poor church.

A preacher who does not preach the Lord Jesus Christ is a very poor preacher. I'm not here to make you feel good or to introduce strategies. I'm here to preach the ancientness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is the one that created all things. He is the Christ of Calvary, but he's far more than that. In 2 Timothy chapter 1 and 9, it says, who has saved us and called us with the holy calling, not according to our works.

And you know that. You've emphasized that, especially you that have come out of the Catholic church. You know the scripture, but you haven't realized the fullness of the scripture, not according to your works,

but according to his own purpose.

It's not your works that saved you. You were actually called, how? According to God's purpose and grace, which was given to us. Listen carefully.

Saints, I want you to meditate on this as I'm preaching. I want you to hear. This is mind-blowing, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the world began.

When did God give grace for you? He gave it before the world began. When you get called by the grace of God, it is according to a purpose that was before time given in the Lord Jesus Christ. When you begin to realize salvation is more than about a few years here, this is bigger than God breaking in on your life.

You're actually being brought out of time into eternity itself. You see, it's God's purpose in Christ. This is God's plan, God's purpose, God's will, and it's all placed or displayed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's the only place you can find it. You'll never know the purpose of God, the plan of God, the desire of God until you find Christ. When you find Christ, all of this just begins to open up.

It begins with forgiveness, with blood redemption, with justification. But you know what? That's only the beginning. You know the word will there for the will of God, what it means? The mystery of his counsel is an old Greek word.

It was well known in Athens during the days of Paul. Listen to the Greek word, buel. Buel, if I'm pronouncing it correctly.

The buel was a grouping of select persons in the city of Athens of about 500 people could be present, but there were 50 presidents in the council. This council decided everything for the city. This council sat together.

They talked about every citizen, about every realm of life and all of society. They sat together, the council or the buel in Athens. They took counsel together.

They resolved. They made decisions. They ran all of the affairs of the city, and they made a plan or a purpose for the city.

Do you realize God the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit sat in counsel? That's what Ephesians chapter 1 says. It says according to his counsel, according to his will, according to his purpose. All of this was an eternity before creation, before time.

And you know what? In that plan and counsel, God the Father took counsel about you and I. We were not mistaught in this. Saints, I'm only beginning here. This is mind-blowing if you can understand.

It changed my life at 12 years old. I've never been the same again from that night. You see, in that counsel, you have the word of God, the logos.

This is the logos, the written word of God. What's Christ called? The word of God. He was in this council chamber.

He was there. Do you know all the plans of God, the will of God, the promises of God, the privileges of God, the provisions of God? They're all contained in this book, but they're also contained in a person. He

is the logos.

Psalms 33 verse 11 says, the counsel of the Lord standeth forever. The thoughts of his heart to all generations. Do you know God has an eternal counsel? Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Father says, I want to redeem sinners who don't even exist yet. Man has not been created. The worlds have not been created.

Man has never sinned. There's no Lucifer or angels, but I have a plan that I want to save sinners and bring them into relationship. The Son in that counsel, he said, Father, if you choose predestinate, make the plan, put it in me.

I'll go and die for them. I'll shed my blood. I'll show them that you love them.

I'll show you of what your heart is for them. The Holy Spirit is there overshadowing everything, and he says, I'll go on a plan. I'll search them out in their dens of drugs, their immorality, their atheism, their unbelief, their rebellion, their dead religion, with all of their statues and idols.

I'll go knocking on the door of their heart and say, there is a Christ that died for you on Calvary. This is the plan of God. That's my first point.

Christ's position in the Godhead was central. Do you see God's plan here? He has made Christ central. In that plan, he said, Christ will be central in creation, and at the cross, and all of history, and in Israel, and in the Bible, and in the church, and at the judgment, and in eternity future.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. My second point here, Christ's provision for the saints. It's here in Ephesians 1. Not only Christ's position in the Godhead in eternity past, but Christ's position for the saints, for the saints.

It says in verse 3, who has, speaking about God the Father, this is the plan. It was made in eternity past. This plan that we are going to read about, you only realized it after salvation.

You're realizing it this morning, but you know when it was made in eternity past, who has blessed us? God the Father has blessed us, listen, with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, where? In Christ's. This is Christ's provision for the saints. You know in Ephesus, in Asia Minor, do you know what Ephesus was? It was the banker of Asia Minor.

It was the financial center. It was one of the third biggest cities in the entire Roman Empire. It had the biggest pagan temple in the entire ancient world to Diana, that mother goddess.

You're talking about an extraordinary city, but there's a church here, and Paul is writing from a prison cell and room to this church that had been saved by the grace of God. And you know what he's doing? I mean, you begin to read Ephesians, you realize Paul has got caught up in his prison cell. He is chained to a Roman soldier.

He is awaiting to stand trial before Caesar. He doesn't know what the future holds, but he's writing this letter with a chain on his hand. Most of you would be grumping about, oh God, why did you allow this? Not the apostle Paul.

As he writes, I mean he's dynamically on fire. He is burning with a heavenly vision. He is revealing all these blessings about Christ's provision for the saints.

You see, Asia, and especially Ephesus, was the bank of the entire region. You know what Paul is saying? He says, you Ephesians think that you support the whole economy. You're the center of the economy of the whole region.

You are the bank and elite of the whole region. I'm going to show you where true wealth is. I'm going to show you the source of it.

I'm going to show you where it's stored up. It's not at Ephesus. It's not in your banks.

It's not in your safe houses. You know what it is? True spiritual blessings are found in only one place, in one place. He says here, hath blessed us.

Past tense. It's a done deal. It is done.

God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings. It's past tense. Every blessing is in Christ.

It's all there for you saints. You may not enjoy it this morning. Your eyes might be blind to it.

You're there with no joy or no peace or no righteousness. I want to tell you, I know who's rich this morning. You're sitting here like you're bankrupt.

Going, I'm a poor sinner in the house of God. Moping about. I don't have any joy.

I don't have any peace. I don't know what God's will is. I don't find any holiness.

You know what? I want to tell you, all of your blessings are in the Lord Jesus Christ. All spiritual blessings. There's not one blessing missed out here.

There's not one blessing that is lacking this morning. He calls them spiritual blessings. They're not natural.

I'm not saying God will make you rich this morning. I'm not saying you're going to walk through life and get everything that you think you should have. I can't say that this morning.

I can't say that you'll go through this life and not have to suffer. God may allow in his will for your heart to be broken and that might perfectly be the will of God. But do you know what? All spiritual blessings.

Do you know all the spiritual blessings that are yours in Christ? Do you know it's open? It's available for you here this morning. Every single blessing. It's also in heavenly places.

It's not of this earth. Don't think of houses or cars or blessings or even friends. I'm talking about heavenly places.

Where do you find all this? In Christ. In Christ. You know if you're after blessings for their own sake, you're going to get distracted.

You'll go running after blessings. Seek Christ. All the blessings are there.

Seek Christ and you'll find the will of God. Seek Christ and you'll have everything that you actually need. Here as we come to Ephesians 1, we have an entire list of blessings down to verse 14 and they're not

limited here.

They flow over through the rest of the letter into Colossians, Philippians, Corinthians. We have an entire book filled with blessings but they're only to be found in the Lord Jesus Christ. It says in Titus chapter 1 verse 2, in hope of eternal life.

Is eternal life a blessing? Is it to be found in Christ? Eternal life which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began. When did God the Father promise eternal life? Before the world began. Who do you think he promised it to? He makes a promise.

Who is he making it to? It's before the world. He's there and the Father said, I promise eternal life. You don't exist.

Mankind doesn't exist. The physical world doesn't exist and yet we've got God the Father saying, I promise. Do you know who he's promising to? Son, I promise if you go and die, I promise that I'll give to eternal life to anyone who believes in you.

I will give it to them and in fact I'll tell you what's more. I want this plan to be in you. I want this thought to be in you.

I want this promise to be in you and I want you to carry it into time. I want you to reveal it unto the saints and to show them that I promise eternal life. It says in Ephesians 1, the very first blessing that he mentions is not the blessing you and I would have mentioned.

It says in verse 4, according as he has chosen us in him, in Christ before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame. What's the first promise he makes? The first provision. I would have thought it would be the blood but he doesn't do that.

The very first spiritual blessing and it is a blessing that according as he, that is God the Father, has chosen us in him, the Lord Jesus Christ. God the Father chose you in the Lord Jesus Christ when before the foundation of the world. Now let me say something, especially for those viewing online.

I'm not a Calvinist. I'm not a Calvinist. I've never been a Calvinist.

I do not believe in limited atonement. I believe that on the cross that Jesus Christ died for the world, that he loved the world. You'll get strict Calvinists.

They'll deny that God loves every sinner. They'll deny that Christ made provision for every sinner. I believe that's wrong.

It's incorrect and some good men do hold that. I am not a Calvinist but neither am I an Arminianist, certainly not. They've got as many faults as the Calvinists do but where the Calvinists are right, I'm gonna say that's true, that's Bible.

Where the Arminianists are right, I'm gonna say that's right. You see, I believe Galatians says, talks about those that fall away from the faith. It teaches it in the Bible.

Fall away from grace. Fall away from the faith but it also talks about election. Listen carefully here as I look at this first blessing in the Lord Jesus Christ in eternity past.

In past, we, you and I, were chosen. You don't exist. You haven't done good or bad.

Mankind hasn't even been created but God the Father has chosen you. Do you know when I was young, a teenager, I thought this out. I was a thinker and I went, I'm gonna crack this.

I'm gonna work this out and I studied and I thought and I came to understand. Election means that God saw we would choose him. Therefore, he chose us.

There I sussed it. I then lifted up a book by Wesley and I found out, wow, Wesley came to the same conclusion as me. God looks down through time, sees that you're gonna accept him and he chooses you.

I was very proud of myself. You know where I'm going. I was very proud of myself.

I went, I have sussed one of the hardest doctrinal questions in the entire world of my generation and in my pride, I went at 16, 17. I went, I've cracked it. I've cracked it.

I'll have to go tell everyone else but as I started to study the Bible more and more and these scriptures I'm telling you about, I want to tell you if God choosing us only means he saw that you'd choose him. It's not election. It's not a choice.

He said you did not choose me but I choose you. You see, there's those in the Arminianist camp and I disagree with them here. They say that God chose us to salvation.

Is that true or false? Listen to what the Bible says. Second Thessalonians 2:13. God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation.

Those who say he chose us because of salvation are biblically wrong. God actually chose you to salvation. It says in John chapter 1 verse 12 that he gave us power to become the sons of God even to them that believe in his name which were born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man but of God's will.

You see, there's those that say oh, I choose him. It was my will. My decision saved me and God saw my choice and he saved me but the Bible teaches against.

He said it's not by the will of flesh. It's not by the will of man. It's by the will of God.

Do you know in eternity past God looked at you? You see, I believe in preaching all of truth. I believe everyone gets an opportunity. I believe there's provision for all.

I believe anyone who chooses to go to hell has deliberately chosen to go there. They will be responsible. You say how do you tie all this together? Very easily.

I believe what the Bible says. When it says he chose me, I believe it. When he warns you about sinning and about departing from him, you believe it.

Saints just believe the word of God and you'll become a theologian. Don't enter into the arguments of others. Say it's not fair.

Who says? Read Romans chapter 9. Paul says what then? It's not fair. An entire chapter on it. I choose Jacob.

The lousy so-and-so. You trying to tell me Jacob was so much better than Esau? Look at Jacob. It was according to election that God chose him.

It says in 1 Peter chapter 1 and 2. I know I'm getting into deep stuff here. I hope we can swim out the other end but you know what? I've got an answer. People with election only see doctrine and they get lost in it.

I see a person. Do you know what? Unless you're in Christ, you can't see this. It's not for you.

You're not to inquire into it. It's not for a sinner. It's not for a man outside of Christ.

This is a blessing that when you get in Christ, when you're forgiven, he says come on to me and be saved. Believe in me and I'll forgive you. I don't desire any man to perish.

I desire all to come to repentance. Saints, I have no problem with these doctrines when I come to Christ. When you find the Lord Jesus Christ, you know what? You find out you're elected, chosen in Christ.

I find this teaching in him. I find this blessing in him that he chose me. But let's go a step further.

Listen. Stand up if you get tired but I want you to listen. I am teaching you some of the most profound things but this is Christ central in eternity past.

Where is election? It's not in time. It doesn't happen on the day of your salvation. It doesn't happen at your conception or a creation.

It was before the world began. But let me go a step further. 1 Peter chapter 1 and 2. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the father.

So you're elect according or because of foreknowledge. Or in line with foreknowledge. This is where I got my revelation and thought I was smart.

Foreknowledge means God saw I would believe. Therefore he chose me. The word foreknowledge is the word prognosis.

It's used in Acts chapter 2 23 and 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 20. For know or foreknowledge is taught in the Bible. What does the word mean? It means to know beforehand.

You know that word know, foreknowledge. The word to know is used of the intimate, private, secret, personal relationship between a father and a mother. Between a husband and a wife.

The Bible says that Adam knew Eve. What a beautiful term. He knew.

That's not talking about he knew about her. It's talking about intimate relationship at its deepest level. The word foreknow means to be aware, to feel, to have knowledge, to understand, to have an assurance of, to have intimate, personal knowledge from the very beginning.

It's foreknowledge. Before the world, God had intimate, deep, personal knowledge about you. I mean he loved you.

He loved you in such an intimate way. He had foreknowledge. That's why he chose you.

Because of foreknowledge, he looked on and he said, I know you. I love you. I desire you.

He was utterly intimate and he elected you or he chose you. Notice it's not about things. Foreknowledge is not about seeing things happen or knowing events.

Foreknowledge is whom he foreknew. It says in Jeremiah chapter one and verse five, before I formed thee in the belly, before you're conceived, I knew you. That's what he said to Jeremiah.

The Bible says that God spoke to Jeremiah. Jeremiah, I'm calling you to be a prophet. But in order to be a prophet and stand against the entire nation and not get discouraged, you need to know something.

I knew you before you were conceived in your mother's womb. I had intimate knowledge. The same as a husband will with his wife.

I had intimate knowledge of you before you were conceived. How can that possibly be? How can God have such intimate knowledge of you when you weren't even conceived in your mother's womb? You see, it's a very personal thing. Jesus goes further in the New Testament.

He says, I am the good shepherd and I know my sheep. I know them. This isn't omniscience.

You see, we know that God is all powerful. He is everywhere and he knows all things. Foreknowledge is different than omniscience.

Foreknowledge is not the same as God knowing all things. It's totally different. And if you don't understand that, you'll get confused.

What is the difference? Omniscience, God knows all facts, all figures, all details, all persons, but he only knows his sheep. That's foreknowledge. I know you.

I know you. But God, you know everyone. No, you don't understand.

I know you. You're mine. You belong to me.

He goes further in Matthew 7, 23, speaking to those that prophesied in his name, cast out demons in his name, who'd done many holy ghost works in his name. What did he say to you? I never knew you. What does he mean? Of course he knew them.

He knew their sin. He knew this iniquity of their heart. He knew their hypocrisy.

He knew their dead religion. But he says, I never, listen to the Greek, I never at any time, either in time or eternity, ever knew you. What does that mean? I never had any plan, any purpose.

I never chose you. I never saved you. I never justified you.

I never dwelt within you. You think I did. You pray for the demon possessed in my name.

You're casting out demons. Get out of Jesus name. You're praying for the sick in Jesus name.

He said, you didn't know me. And I didn't know you. What a drastic thing.

It says in 2 Timothy 2 and 19, the Lord knows them that are his. He has intimate knowledge. What is foreknowledge? Before the world, he knew you.

He knew you. And because of that knowledge, he chose you. This is utterly remarkable.

It's about persons, not actions, not responses. And foreknowledge is not foresight. Oh, I know God chose me because he had foresight.

He saw what I do. I believe and repent and believe and turn onto him. And he foresaw, therefore he chose me.

That's utterly impossible. Listen, Eve would not have become pregnant merely with foresight on Adam's part. Adam's going to have to do more than have foresight.

There's got to be action. Do you know God's foresight wouldn't have had an effect in your life? His actual knowledge, personal, intimate foreknowledge is very different than merely knowing facts about you. This term foreknowledge is the Greek word prognosis.

You know they use it, doctors use it today, don't they? Do you know it was created 400 years before Christ by Hippocrates? He created this term prognosis. Listen carefully before we close here. It appears to me, and this is what he's writing 400 years before Christ, about the word foreknowledge.

It appears to me, speaking as a doctor, a most excellent thing for the physician or the doctor to cultivate prognosis for by foreseeing and foretelling in the presence of the sick, the present, the past, and the future, and explaining omissions which the patients have been guilty of, he will be more readily believed. They're going to be convinced this man, this man is God. This man knows the past, the present, the future.

He knows what I have been doing, and he can predict the future. Just do this and you will get well. Do you want to know why doctors in our day play God? They think they have the ability of prognosis, which is foreknowledge, which only God has.

Only God has foreknowledge, the ability to know all things and to know you, even from before time. That's the great danger of doctors in our day. They're playing God, and they say, we know more than they really do know.

They play around with prognosis and say, I know your past, I know your present, I know your future, but saints, let me point you to a greater physician. His name is the Lord Jesus Christ. He knows everything about you.

He knew your ailments before you were created. He knew your past, your beginning, your future, your all. I want to trust this doctor Jesus with my prognosis.

His foreknowledge made him choose me. Saints, I can only find, I've searched this Bible for years. I've only found three reasons in the biblical text, outside of man's theories, that say why he chose me.

Number one, because he loved me. Number two, because of his will. Number three, because he decided it.

Saints, I want to tell you, there is such a thing. Here in verse five, it says, having predestinated us. This is still the work of the father.

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself. This is all an eternity past. When did God the father predestinate us? Notice here, election and predestination has to do with persons, not events, not things.

It's not clinical, it's not cold. This is my God who created all things, desiring me, wanting me. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children.

What does the word predestinate mean? Listen, it means to limit in advance, predestinate. It means to set the destiny before the beginning. It means to limit in advance, to set or establish a boundary, to mark out or set a final destination, to pre-establish boundaries.

The word used here for predestination is the word we use for horizon. In the Greek language, the word for horizon, there's a boundary, there is an end, there is a final goal. That is predestination.

In other words, God, before he even created the world, set the final destination of the elect. What is predestination? It is to determine beforehand, to ordain that you will be adopted as children. You see, predestination is not a clinical, religious, Calvinistic term.

It is a biblical term. Many years ago, as a young man, three times when I was a teenager, I seen a preacher get into the pulpit, this is what he said. He would read the text of Ephesians 1. He put the finger in the word predestination, and he said, listen to me, I do not believe in predestination.

He just read it in the Bible, and really what he meant was, I don't believe what some people teach. I don't believe in some doctrinal view. But he never got further than that.

As a young teenager, he never went on to tell me what it did mean. He just said, I do not believe in this word predestination. Can I warn you, don't throw out these doctrinal words.

You have a wrong concept. You can't accept them. They're not palatable to you.

You say, I don't believe in election or predestination. Fine. I understand some people cannot accept this, but I want to tell you, it's a biblical word.

You were predestined to the adoption of children. How? By Christ Jesus. This is one of the blessings within the Lord Jesus.

It says in 1 Corinthians 2 and 7, but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained. It's the word predestinated. The Lord ordained before the world unto our glory.

It says in Romans 8, 29, for whom he did foreknow, he did also predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. What is predestination? It was that in that eternal counsel between the father, the son, and the spirit, they made a plan. They predestinated you.

It's God's plan how to make you like Jesus. You won't understand what predestination is. It is God's plan working right now.

It is God planning in all the activities of your life, all the circumstance of life, of how to get you to be like Jesus, to love like Jesus, to trust him like Jesus did, to walk like Jesus did. There is a predestinated plan to conform you to Christ. Since if holiness isn't involved in this, it's not God's will for you.

He has a plan. God's plan in eternity to make you like Jesus Christ in time. It goes further in Philippians 3 and 10 saying, being made conformable unto his death.

Do you see what's happening in time? To become more like Jesus, you're going to die. You'll die to your own ambitions, your own way, your own choices, your own decisions, your own, you've got all your plans. Can I ask you this morning, what about God's plan? What about God's plan? This is my last finally, okay? I'm closing, but let me on this third and final point, close.

What is my third point? Just give me a few minutes. His inheritance in the saints. We've seen Christ's position in the Godhead.

We've seen his provisions for the saints, but let me summarize this now. His inheritance in the saints. It says in verse 11, in whom also we have obtained an inheritance.

That's very obvious, isn't it? I've been forgiven. I've been adopted. I've been chosen.

I've been accepted in the beloved. There's a whole list of blessings. I have received eternal life.

My name is written in the Lamb's book of life. All of these blessings are all are yay and amen in Christ Jesus. They're all of ours.

So we see that we have an inheritance in verse 14, which is the earnest of our inheritance. What's my third and final point? His inheritance in the saints. You see, you've got an inheritance, not from mommy or daddy or grandpa and grandma.

You have an inheritance from him. But since my last point here is his inheritance, you say, where do you get that? I get that here in verse 18, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened. Do you know there's blessings of what God has done, but you're blind to it.

You don't see it. You don't have revelation. You don't have understanding.

The Holy Spirit hasn't been able to show you. And yet he says, I want your eyes to be enlightened. Paul here in verse 18 is praying for the Ephesians, the eyes of your understanding, being enlightened that you may know, since there's some things you don't know in this room, you could be like a 16 year old thinking, I know everything.

No, you really don't. Neither do I. The more I get on in this journey, I know very, very little here. I mean it with all my heart.

I know very little. I see very little. I walk very little in the light compared to what I desire.

The further I go on this journey, I go, this is bigger and greater than I ever imagined a year ago or 10 years ago. But here he says, the Jew may know what is the hope of his calling, his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. God, as we close this meeting, I want to tell you, God here in Ephesians 1, Paul is praying saying, open their eyes so that they will begin to see what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.

Do you know God has an inheritance in you? What is that inheritance? What is this inheritance in the saints? Do you know Christ is going to inherit a people? He's going to inherit a bride. He's going to inherit a church. He's going to inherit a people out of this world saved by the grace of God.

You are his jewels. You are the bride of Christ. You are the church of the redeemed.

There is coming forth a people. And you know what? On that day, and we'll have to wait to eternity future, that's where it's going to be saved. It's from time immoral, from eternity past through eternity coming.

And you know what the father says? I've got an inheritance for you. Son, it's not all you just given. You're going to receive back a people that love you, that lay everything at your feet, that will worship you for all eternity, that are going to be utterly devoted, that they'd even lay down their life for you.

They so love you, they will not compromise and they'll lay down their life serving you all of their days. Saints, I'm telling you about the centrality of Christ in eternity past. Next week, we're going to look at the centrality of Christ in creation.

But before we ever go there, you've got to realize there was a Christ in eternity past with the father and the son, and they were making a council, a purpose, a will, and all of the promises were put in Christ. In fact, Isaiah says, I give you the anointed one as a covenant to the people who are in darkness. Who's he speaking of? Jesus.

I'm making you a covenant, which I'm going to put all my promises in you. You are my plan, you're my purpose, you hold all my promises, and I'm going to give you as a covenant of grace, a covenant of salvation to those that are in darkness on their way to hell. If you don't die and suffer for them, they're lost.

Saints, Christ is coming for an inheritance. Have you thought about what inheritance you're producing and bringing forth a life to say, I'm your inheritance, I'm your jewel? Stand with me here this morning. Father, we do thank you.

We praise you. To you be all the glory and the praise and the honor this morning. We do, like we read in Ephesians 1, want to be unto the praise of your glory.

My God, I pray, open our eyes this morning, that it would change our life. We're not an accident of time, nor God, we're not here by mere accident. We're not the leftovers.

We're not the fallout of an entire generation. But my God, from the very beginning, before you created this world, you knew what sin that we would be in. You knew what we would be like.

You knew our rebellion against you, and yet you chose us and sent your son to die for us. My God, we pray, have mercy on this generation. Thank you that everything is in the Lord Jesus Christ this morning.

My God, open our eyes that we might see that in Christ, we're chosen. In Christ, we're accepted. In Christ, we're forgiven.

In Christ, promises have been made unto me, not directly to me, not directly to me, but made to me in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every promise, every provision, everything that you have, your love, your desire, your thoughts, is all stored up in him. My God, minister unto everyone in this room.

Minister unto everyone in this meeting. My God, minister of your love right now. Break every chain.

Break every lie of hell. Saints, lift your hands. Just love him and worship him.

Just worship him as we close. Open up your heart. Receive of the love of God.

Receive of the mercy and the goodness of God. He loved you from eternity past. He set his love upon you and desired you, saints.

If only you could see it this morning. This will change your life to go, he knew you, spoke to the son about you. Do you realize that? That he spoke to his son, to the Holy Spirit about you, and you could think that you're some accident.

You think that you're struggling to receive the promises of God. You're there going, is this promise for me? Not in you. Not in you.

You can wrestle with the promises of God and say, I'm not sure I can believe this is for me. I'm not sure I can believe this forgiveness is for me. I don't deserve it.

I don't deserve his grace. I don't deserve his goodness. Of course you don't.

Don't you get it? Saints, don't you get it this morning? In yourself, you can't receive anything. It's in the son. In the son, I give you forgiveness.

In the son, I make promises. In the son, I will make sure that you walk with me. In my son, you will find holiness and righteousness.

In my son, there's a plan to change your life. In my son is my will for you. Oh, how do I know it's for me? Just find the son.

Just find the son, because in the son, you'll find all of this, everything to satisfy your heart. He'll change you. He'll change you.

I promise you. It's so real. Let's worship.

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